Dewan's reply.—Mr. John, it seems to me that you are fighting a phantom. I do not think that it is seriously contended that a railway through North Travancore is a wild cat scheme. A railway through North Travancore would be one of the most useful things that could be done, and I may tell you, if it would satisfy you, that a railway through North Travancore—a railway connecting Kottarakara on the Shencottah-Quilon line with the Cochin Harbour or with the Ernakulam-Shoranur line—is considered to be an integral part of the Cochin harbour scheme. This railway is, therefore, bound to come one day or another. There is no dispute as to the necessity or as to the wisdom of constructing such a railway. I am personally a great advocate of improvement of railway communications (*cheers*), as I am of the improvement of all communications. It is now too late in the day to say that a railway through North Travancore is not desirable.

Having said so much, the question is what is the *modus operandi*? The first and foremost thing is the survey. It is by making a survey that you will be in a position to decide the route of this railway, and the degree of accuracy of the determination of this route would depend upon the sort of survey you adopt. If it is a mere reconnaissance survey, you simply decide roughly what direction the line will take. But if you make a detailed survey, you fix the line within very narrow limits. Well, as I have already said in my opening Address, we have obtained the sanction of the Government of India, which is necessary for the survey of such lines. We are now engaged in the survey of the Trivandrum-Nagercoil line. We estimated that survey to last for three or four months; but our expectations have been belied and the survey of that line is not yet over, though Mr. Marini has been at it now for a period of over six months. He has done only about two-thirds of that line. It will take another two or three months for him to complete that survey, and when that is done, the question of the survey of this line has to be taken up. I said guardedly and advisedly that the question of this survey would be considered, because, however keen the Government may be in starting the survey of the line, if the Legislative Council says that it does not consider the survey of the line urgent, we shall have to wait. Therefore, I said that the matter would be taken up for consideration as soon as this survey was over. Probably, when this survey is over, it will be time for the next budget.

The Member then pointed out that he did not speak on the money question because the Chief Engineer had told him that it was not a difficult matter to get money if it was decided that the work should be started.

Dewan.—The question of financing the railway is entirely premature now. We shall take up the question of survey of this line as soon as the survey of the other line is over. The construction of the railway and the selection of the particular route are not very simple matters. You yourself said that we do not want a railway for show. We want a railway, firstly as an advantage to the country, and secondly as a source of gain and not as a source of loss like the Shencottah-Quilon Railway. We must decide the route. You said that there was an impression that the railway line would go *via* Alleppey and Shertallai. That is a possible route for a railway line. I do not consider that to be a proper route, because the railway line will have to compete with a water-way and there is a well-made water-way there. As you all know, a water-way is much cheaper than a railway, and therefore I do not think that it is at all probable. Very probably it will go well away from the coast. It will try to avoid competition with all water-ways. That is what appears to a lay man like me as desirable. We cannot say anything finally until the survey is completed.

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH; MUNICIPAL COUNCILS AND MEDICAL RELIEF.

(1) Municipal Councils.

79. Suggestions for improving the working of the Nagercoil Municipality.

Mr. R. Dharmaraja Aiyar (Member, Municipal Council, Nagercoil) said tha many parts of the town, especially Vadivisvaram, Kottar and Vakayadi wards were

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congested, that there was no proper drainage or good water supply, that cremation grounds and wet cultivation near habitations were in existence in some localities to the detriment of public health, that the condition of cattle was deteriorating both in number and quality, and that there were no good milk supply, no facilities for grazing, and no cattle stands, that stray cattle in the streets had become a nuisance and a source of danger to the public, and that the presence of arrack and liquor shops and the distillery at Nagercoil had become a source of danger to the people. To improve the condition of cattle and milk supply the Member proposed that grazing grounds and cattle-stands should be provided wherever possible. Portions of the Putteri tank, Tattayarkulam tank and Chayakkarankulam outside the limits of the town, where no water was collected in any part of the year and a portion of the Silpasari tank and the tank near the Executive Engineer's office might, he said, be reserved as grazing grounds, and suitable *poramboke* lands within the Municipality might be used as cattle stands. He requested that the above sites be handed over to the Municipal Council for the exclusive use of cattle belonging to the citizens of the town of Nagercoil. He also pointed out that a few applications from private individuals for some of the tanks for grazing purposes were pending before the Irrigation authorities and requested that early action be taken to see that the tanks were not given away to any one, as a public body like the Municipality was in need of the same.

With regard to the supply of pure water, the Member requested Government to expedite the investigation of the water scheme, to give immediate relief to the wards of Vadivisvaram and Kottar which had no fresh water, since all the wells were brackish, to fill the two tanks near Minakshipuram and the Police Station with good water from Anandan *kal* as had been recommended by the Executive Engineer to the Chief Engineer. He said that those tanks would be necessary for bathing and communal purposes even when a water supply scheme came into force. As regards the investigation of the water supply scheme, the Member suggested that the construction of the Velimalai reservoir, one of the recommendations of the famous Irrigation Engineer, Mr. Horsely, might be considered, and he added that that reservoir was only seven miles from the town and would ensure not only permanent sources of water supply to Anandan *kal* but also facilitate the bringing in of new lands under cultivation. To relieve the water-scarcity in the hottest months after the Pachipara reservoir was closed, arrangements should be made to let in some water into the Pazhayar from the Paraliyar, and also by filling the Putteri tank which was situated at the northern extremity of the town. By filling the Putteri tank with good water, it would be possible to let water occasionally from that tank into the Pazhayar. Whenever it was found impossible or impracticable to draw water from Paraliyar and Putteri tank, Government should open the Pachiparai Dam occasionally and let water into the left bank channel. The Pachiparai Dam was being opened for the Mandakad Utsavam and the Suchindram Utsavam in Chitirai and other urgent purposes. Similarly, if necessary, arrangements might be made to let water into the Pazhayar even by opening the Pachiparai Dam occasionally. To give relief during the ensuing summer season, the Member requested that, since the Pachiparai Dam was to be opened on the 24th Masi for the Mandakad festival, water might be let into the Pazhayar and that the Putteri tank might also be filled.

As regards the shifting of the liquor and arrack shops, the Member proposed that the shops be removed from the limits of the town. He also pointed out that, though the Excise Department had made arrangements for the removal of the spent-wash of the distillery, situated in the heart of the town, people derived no relief from those arrangements. He suggested that it was highly necessary for the sanitation of the town that the spent-wash should be removed either completely or by resorting to other methods which would remove stench.

The Member also proposed that the wet cultivation near Kottar Ezhava quarters and Meenakshipuram must be stopped and the tax on those lands remitted.

The Member observed that, under the present condition of the people of the town, it was undesirable to impose fresh taxes and that professional tax should not be introduced for some years to come.

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To cope with the heavy work in the local Hospital the Member suggested that it was highly necessary to increase the staff by the addition of a female doctor and a few nurses as had been recommended by the Council.

The Member next stated that the Municipality must have a well-conducted public library, a public hall and recreation grounds, and that, if sites were given by the Government, it would be possible for the Municipality and the people to co-operate and achieve something in that direction. He suggested that the building near the Municipal office where the P. W. D. Special Section office was held and the tank east of the Engineer's quarters might be handed over to the Municipality for the purpose.

In order to bring the action of the President of the Municipal Council under the control of the Council, the Member urged that it was necessary that the executive of the Municipality should be made responsible to the Council and that the President should be given power of making appointments carring a pay of Rs. 20 and below, the other appointments being made by the Council only. The Member pointed out that it was highly undesirable that wards having 150 or 250 voters and paying heavy taxes should be allowed only a single vote and suggested that the number of members of the Council be increased to the maximum of 24, the additional seats being filled by the wards having the largest number of voters. The system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable votes might be adopted by the Municipalities.

Dewan's reply.—Mr. Dharmaraja Aiyar, I am at a loss to know how to reply to you. You have touched upon so many aspects of municipal administration—matters of principle as well as matters of detail. So far as matters of detail are concerned, it seems to me that the proper thing to do is to get the Council to pass resolutions in regard to each of them and then to address the Government. You yourself say that, in matters on which you have addressed the Government, they have already taken action. As regards the investigation of the water supply scheme, the Council sent up a scheme with an estimate for Rs. 4,000. The Government sanctioned the scheme and said that they would meet half the cost. If you move the Council to pass definite resolutions in regard to each matter, they will receive the most careful consideration at the hands of the Government, and Government will try, as far as possible, to comply with the wishes of the Council. That is all that I can say in regard to matters of detail.

You next raised the question of taxation. Government have been accepting the recommendations of Councils in regard to this matter. Your Council said that professional tax need not be levied in 1098 and Government agreed to it. It is for the Council to work out its own ways and means, and if the Council thinks that a particular tax is unnecessary or undesirable, Government will ordinarily accept that suggestion. So far as your Council is concerned, it is very sound financially, and, I believe, its working is also efficient.

You then referred to what you call nuisances. They are all matters of detail and Government will have to be addressed separately in regard to each such matter.

As regards the question of appointments and powers of the President, that is a very wide question. I think opinions will be divided in regard to that matter. If I consult the Municipal Presidents and Vice-Presidents who are present here, I do not think they would at all agree with you, because, in a sense, the head of the executive must have the power to control the staff. Otherwise, work cannot be got done. You say that the Council must have powers to interfere with the actions of the executive. This is a big question and it will have to be considered how far it will interfere with the efficiency of administration. If in any particular matter the Council is of opinion that the executive head has acted wrongly or unwisely, there are other remedies open to the Council. The question of taking away the disciplinary powers now vested in the President and delegating them to the Council is one of very great importance, and no off-hand reply can be given, nor can any change be made until after very careful consideration and until Government are satisfied that there is a general concensus of opinion in that matter.

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As regards the immediate letting in of water into the Puttery tank, it is not a matter which is so easy of solution as you seem to think. We have stored water in the Kodayar in the interests of irrigation. I have handed over your memorial to the Chief Engineer and I have asked him to see whether water could be let into that tank, in connection with the ensuing Mandakad festival.

80. Suggestions for improving the trade and sanitation of Colachel.

Mr. M. Nilakanta Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Colachel) represented that the town of Colachel had been a commercial centre from the time of its occupation by the Dutch and that even now four European Firms were having their business there. In view of the importance of the town, a canal known as the Ananda Victoria Martanda Varma Canal was opened and the trade of the place developed when it had land and water connection with the capital. Subsequently, when the canal silted up and it was auctioned away by the Government, the merchants had to transport their goods by the land route alone. They now found it very difficult to transmit these articles to other places owing to the exhorbitant rate of cart hire prevalent after the war. The Member referred to the survey of the Trivandrum-Nagercoil railway that was being conducted and requested that arrangements might be made to connect Colachel with the railway so as to improve the trade of the town.

He stated that Colachel was a municipal town with a fairly large population numbering nearly 8,000 inhabitants. He represented that the extension of the railway from Trivandrum to Nagercoil should be so constructed as to touch that important commercial town, alike in the interests of the Government and the people.

He next stated that the provision of a hospital in that town was an imperative necessity. The subject had been brought to the notice of the Government even as early as the sixteenth session of the Assembly, but no action had been taken on the representation so far. The provision of an Ayurveda Vaidyasala was another urgent need of the locality.

Dewan's reply.—Mr. Nilakanta Pillai, the question of taking the Trivandrum-Nagercoil Railway line through Colachel or near it is engaging the attention of the Government seriously, and if it is at all possible and if it appears distinctly advantageous, Government will approve of a line which goes as near Colachel as possible.

Then in regard to the conversion of the local dispensary into a hospital, I do not think that it is a matter of great urgency. I have seen the dispensary myself. It is in a good locality and I have given general instructions that in all dispensaries there should be emergency wards. Colachel is within short distances from, and has easy access to, Nagercoil, Neyyur, Thuckalai and other places where there are big hospitals. I therefore do not think that a hospital there is immediately necessary. If, luckily, you get a railway near Colachel and your town becomes more important, the question of the conversion of the dispensary there into a hospital will have to be considered. I do not think that it is a matter for immediate consideration.

As regards the establishment of an Ayurveda Vaidyasala there, the Director of Ayurveda says that it is not necessary to have one at Colachel. I do not agree with him. I think that Colachel is important enough to have an aided Ayurveda Vaidyasala, and I shall ask the Director of Ayurveda to include Colachel in the list of places where aided Vaidyasalas should be established next year.

81. Needs of the Padmanabhapuram Municipality.

Mr. K. N. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Padmanabhapuram) began his representation by saying that the town of Padmanabhapuram, besides being the ancient capital of Travancore, was the seat of the Division from the time of its constitution till its abolition two years ago. Besides the Division Cutcherry, there were the District Hospital, the Munsiff's court, the Taluk Cutcherry, the first and the second Class Magistrates' courts, the Sub-Registrar's office, the Sanketam Cutcherry and the Police station. All these institutions were one by one transferred from the Fort to Thuckalai, the only remnant left being the new Additional District Magistrates' court. The Municipal office and the Panchayat and

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